

REMARKS

This is responsive to the Office Action issued on December 23, 2003. By this response, claims 32 and 38 are rewritten into independent form, and claims 17-25, 28-31, 36, 37, 44-49, 51, 52, 126, 127, 136-150 are cancelled without prejudice. No new matter is added. Claims 1-4, 9, 10, 50 and 133 were previously cancelled. Claims 13-16, 27, 40-43 and 54-124 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 5-8, 11, 12, 26, 32-35, 38-39, 53, 125, 128-132, 134, 135 and 151 are now active for examination. Entry of the amendment and these remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 5-8, 11, 12, 26, 53, 125, 128-132, 134, 135 and 151. Claims 32-35 and 38-39 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that claims 32-35, 38 and 39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 17-25, 126 and 136-145 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendrix (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,927) in view of van den Bossche (U.S. Patent No. 6,279,246 B1) and Anderson (U.S. Patent No. 4,726,122). Claims 28-31, 36, 44-49, 51, 52, 127 and 146-147 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Hendrix in view of Jackson (U.S. Patent No. 5,724,743), van den Bossche and Anderson. Claim 37 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendrix, Jackson, van den Bossche, Anderson and Sturge et al. Sturge (U.S. Patent No. 4,977,524). Claims 148-150 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over van den Bossche in view of Anderson.

By this Response, all the rejected claims are cancelled without prejudice. Thus, the rejections of claims 17-25, 28-31, 36, 37, 44-49, 51, 52, 126, 127, 136-150 are now moot.

Claims 32-35 and 38-39 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that claims 32-35, 38 and 39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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By this Response, claims 32 and 38 are rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims, as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, claims 32 and 38 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 33-35 and 39, directly or indirectly, depend on claims 32 and 38, respectively, and incorporate every limitation thereof. Since claims 32 and 38 are in condition for allowance, claims 33-35 and 39 are also in condition for allowance based on their respective dependencies of claims 32 and 38, as well as on their own merits.

Entry of Claim Amendment and Withdrawal of Finality Are Requested

As discussed above, it is believed that the claim amendment has placed the application in condition for allowance. Entry of the claim amendment and withdrawal of the finality are respectfully requested. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Recognition under 37 CFR §10.9(b)

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Date: March 23, 2004